

Pinelands Acquisitions – Lands of Limited Practical Use

The Limited Practical Use (LPU) Program is a unit within the NJ DEP Green Acres Program. LPU started in 1995 as a joint venture involving the National Park Service (NPS) and the Pinelands Commission when Federal and State funding was made available for the acquisition of properties within the Pinelands National Reserve that were denied “full use” due to strict building, environmental, and land use considerations. The NPS provides matching funding, the PC will set criteria, and DEP will acquire the properties in the name of the State of New Jersey and hold them or transfer them to other public or private nonprofit agencies or individuals with conservation restrictions that guarantee open space use in perpetuity.

In March 1996, DEP notified all property owners that the acquisition process had been started. This initial “Letter of Introduction” broadly spelled out the acquisition process and provided each property owner with a point of contact within the DEP. Since the beginning, LPU has developed into three sub-programs.

1. **The LPU Program:** LPU is a purchase program, is fair to all property owners, and is simple, efficient, effective, and economical for the DEP to operate and administer. The LPU program has not been designed to compensate the property owner for the land in the same way that a private, arm’s length land sale in the most aggressive real estate market would. The LPU program provides a measure of relief – relieving the property owner of the continued burden of carrying this property after all attempts to develop the parcel have been exhausted. It is based on a formula of \$2,000 for the first acre or part thereof, and \$1,000 for each additional acre up to a maximum of 6.5 acres or \$7,500. Larger parcels are appraised.
 - NPS reimbursement of 50% is eligible on those properties acquired by formula for less than \$2,000 or by appraisal. Those properties acquired for more than \$2,500 are fully State funded.
 - Participation is limited to properties that go through the process of requesting a Waiver of Strict Compliance and by an acreage restriction of no more than 50 acres.
 - Lands acquired are assigned to a DEP land-holding Division or given to a participating community that agrees to hold the lands for open space purposes. The community can sell the property (with conservation restrictions) thereby returning the lands to the tax rolls.
 - Those properties that are of no interest to DEP or not in a participating community, are held by Green Acres until disposition can be determined.
2. **The Community Assistance Program:** CAP is a reimbursement program to participating communities. An area is delineated as a future consolidated municipal open space/recreation area. LPU reimburses up to \$400 per parcel or \$1,000 per acre (whichever is less).
 - Expenditures under the CAP are not eligible for Federal reimbursement.
 - Future development of the area would be subject to PC approval.
3. **The Quick Action Program:** QA is voluntary and follows the same purchase procedures as those established under LPU, however, with greater flexibility. Property owners come directly to DEP, avoiding the PC Waiver process.
 - Expenditures under the QA are not eligible for federal reimbursement assistance.
 - QA permits the acquisition of properties larger than 50 acres.
 - QA requires that property owners acknowledge that they initiated the offer and that the land has limited development potential.
 - QA requires that a DEP land holding Division have an interest in the property or it is in a Participating Community.

The program is managed by Howard Wolf, P. O. Box 412, Trenton, NJ 08625 (609)984-0572 or howard.wolf@dep.state.nj.us